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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

IN a recent volume, *Creative Society* (S.C.M. ; 5s. net), Professor John MACMURRAY sets forth what he conceives to be the essential meanings of Christianity and Communism and puts forward an earnest plea for what he calls 'real' Christianity.

But how does he define 'real' Christianity? It is the Christianity which seeks to establish the universal community of mankind, the basis of which is the sense of unity between man and man, and the expression of which is the sharing of the means of life to meet human needs. There are three elements in this definition or description, and they may be regarded as the moments—thesis, antithesis, synthesis—of that dialectical process which, according to our author, constitutes our social development.

The thesis is the religious sense of unity between man and man. This is what Jesus inculcates and promotes, and it is what the Christian Church has inculcated and promoted all through the centuries. But the indictment here made is that the Christian Church has not been faithful to the mind of its Lord and Master. The love-motive, in which religion consists, has been directed towards objects which are mystical or supernatural or other-worldly. But, according to the mind of Jesus, the love-motive should express itself, as in the case of the Good Samaritan, in practical co-operation and practical provision for individual and material needs. Thus Christianity has been an ideal and not a real religion.

'The idealism of pseudo-Christianity does not consist in false beliefs and fictitious ideas, but in the divorce of true ideas and beliefs from the conditions of their expression in material action. Let us take hold of the perversion by the roots. The idealism of pseudo-Christianity consists finally in the divorce between love and hunger, through which love becomes an ideal, and hunger is left to control and determine action.'

The antithesis in the dialectical process of social development is the Communist sharing of the means of life to meet human needs. This is the one purpose of Communism. Here the hunger-motive has become dissociated from the love-motive. Religion and Christianity have been repudiated, and materialism uplifts itself in bold independence. Idealist religion and anti-religious materialism are in dialectical opposition. However, it is the weakness of Communism that it finds no real place for the love-motive, that it has cut itself loose from the inspirations of religion.

'The real difference between Christianity and Communism in practice lies in the fact that Communism has a more limited conception of the nature of personality through confining itself entirely to the hunger-motives as its essential basis. Christianity in its real expression would see this aspect of the individual life as falling within the aspect which is concerned with the individual's need for self-transcendence, his need to enter into free and

spontaneous mutuality with his fellows. A Christian Communism would be concerned not merely to affirm and supply the individual hunger-needs of all its members but, in addition to and as the full purpose of this, to provide the conditions for free mutual relationship and the creative personal expressions of human life which have their roots in this self-transcendence of human personality.'

The synthesis in the dialectical movement is the realization of the universal community of mankind. It will only come after the separation of Christianity and Communism into conscious antagonism, and by a reformation of Christianity through a thorough-going attack upon all the perverted forms of Christianity itself. According to Professor MACMURRAY, then, Communism has appeared in the justice of history, in the dialectic of social progress, to correct the idealism of the Christian Church, and to awaken it to a real fulfilment of its end and purpose. When the universal community of mankind shall have been realized, the Kingdom of Heaven will have come.

'The answer I would give to Christians who ask what they must do would be this. Attack pseudo-Christianity openly and resolutely in all its forms, in the name of real Christianity. The religious revolution is the immediate and special responsibility of the Christians. Unless we can vindicate the substantial material reality of our religion, we are powerless to do anything effective. There must be war to the death between real and unreal religion, even if it should cleave organized Christianity in two and destroy all its existing forms.'

In the volume, *The Church in the Modern World* (S.P.C.K. ; 2s. 6d. net), which contains the addresses given at the annual Cromer Convention in June last, there is an interesting contribution by Canon T. Guy ROGERS, entitled 'The Church and the Clash of World Forces.' We may venture to make one criticism of the addresses generally. There does not appear to be any adequate attempt to define the Church. One would expect this to be done in

the paper on 'The Nature of the Church.' Is the Salvation Army part of the Church? And the Friends? The question is an urgent one, because on the answer depends the possibility of unity in action, of co-operation for the ends of the Kingdom of God. But that is by the way.

Canon ROGERS begins with a wholesome warning against 'minimising' the gospel. We must not, he says, study the world with a view simply to discovering what residuum of Christianity it is willing to accept. This was Ronald Knox's criticism of the celebrated book, 'Foundations.' He called his reply 'Loose Stones.' His point was that the message of the Church was being reduced in order that it might pass down the gullet of the modern world. 'How much will Jones swallow?' seemed to be the issue. Canon ROGERS insists that there will always be tension between the Church and the world, and between the teaching of the Church and philosophies of life which are popular in the world. This has always been the case. The Church has always been called upon to consider its message in relation to human liberty or social justice or the rapacious demands of Imperialism. And the demand is repeated to-day with a peculiar urgency.

In the world to-day there are three different types of organized society which are competing with each other for the suffrages of the human race. There is Fascism (with its near relative, Naziism). At the other end there is Communism. And there is also a third alternative, Democracy, which, according to the exponents of both these other systems, is on its last legs. Now what we are concerned with as we think of these three orders of society is this: Is God committed to any particular form of the organized State? Do any of these rival systems constitute a challenge which the Church is bound to take up? In regard to that, the writer is immensely impressed by the fact that, just as God is tolerant of all kinds of Church organization, so He is willing to work by means of any organ of society that will allow light and truth to get through. And therefore it would be wise to say that there is no form of government which we know of that absolutely conforms to the will of God.

The Christian Church naturally regards Democracy with favour because of the principle of government by consent, and because of the emphasis on the value of the individual. But Democracy can be dangerous when it asserts the inherent sovereignty of the people, a doctrine which is essentially anti-Christian, because such sovereignty is the attribute of no person or collection of persons, but only of the Moral Law and of God who is the Moral Law in personal form. But, if the Church is to befriend Democracy, it must be an educated Democracy. One of the supreme interests of the Church is *truth*, not merely the truth of 'Salvation' and of grace, but the truth about man's nature and destiny and his relation to others; the truth with all its social and economic implications. Democracy makes severe demands on the moral qualities of its citizens. Without education, without knowledge and reverence for the truth, without the spiritual power to obey it, Democracy becomes unworkable, and succumbs, as it has done over half the world, to cruder, more violent, less morally exacting forms of government; and unless we concern ourselves with creating an educated Democracy, it will go, even in this country, as it has gone elsewhere.

After all, the real test of rival systems of government is their results. And it is obvious that Italian and German citizens are satisfied with their totalitarian state. They regard the suppression of individual liberty, the standardization of thought, the regimentation of life, political nationalism, and military force as, at any rate, the price they are prepared to pay for the synthesis which they have achieved. And what is that synthesis? Their problem is how to deal with the various 'classes' in a country. They have a horror of relapsing into proletarianism, but they want to bring about happier relationships between different classes of society—they have abolished the word 'class'—so that all can work together for the common good. They wish to abolish class feeling by making workers, professional men, peasants, shopkeepers, landowners, equally content with and proud of their place in the scheme of things.

The goal is a classless state, but with a measure of

private property, through the control of capital in the interests of the State, allowing a certain amount of inequality of income. There are no 'classes,' but there are 'estates of the realm,' which are thought of as people used to think of guilds in the Middle Ages. National Socialism stresses the inherent equality of these different estates and demands an equal opportunity for all. Moreover, part of their purpose is to bring the military ideal of heroism into common life. We talk of Germany being so militaristic, but there is another interpretation possible—that they really believe that the military spirit of discipline, devotion, sacrifice for the sake of the people, should be brought into the ordinary affairs of life. They have been trying to make the people understand that 'peace' is an opportunity for such service as the soldier renders in time of war.

With all its merits, however, there is one fatal defect in Naziism, and its kindred system Fascism, the deification of the State. Indeed, in this respect, Naziism is worse than Fascism. Fascism is based on the symbols and myth of the *State* as the higher being and the supreme value. German National-Socialism is based on the symbol and myth of the *Race* as the higher form of being and the supreme value. It talks of the mystical significance of blood. The State is only an instrument in the hands of nationality and the race. And this throws the Church into permanent opposition, because it is the deification of the German people. And we know that it is no longer possible for the Christian in Germany to live his life happily under the conditions proper to religion. He is asked not only to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, but to render to Cæsar the things that are God's.

There is hope that things will be better by and by. The present situation is largely due to post-war sufferings. And, as the nation recovers its prosperity, it will recover its self-respect and a saner attitude. Canon ROGERS thinks that there are signs of change in Italy now. There are 'murmurs,' and when the Dictators pass we shall probably see a reaction in favour of the human liberty which we believe the gospel stands for. There is not so

much ground for hope about Communism. It is not due, as Naziism and Fascism to some extent, to pathological causes. It is a cold, relentless creed. It is the only genuine anti-Christian system in the world, and constitutes a naked challenge to religion and to Christian standards of morals.

But there is something more to be said, and something that goes deeper. Behind all the unrest and instability in the world, which makes itself felt in the imperialism of Italy and Japan, or in the revolutionary movements of Russia and Germany, there lie economic forces which are responsible for dissipating both morality and religion. It is not solely race feeling. It is race feeling stirred into flame by economic distress. All our troubles may be traced to economic sources. The struggle for markets keeps the nations in perpetual economic war. Expanding populations compel governments to cast covetous eyes upon their neighbours' territories. The unsolved problem of unemployment and the unjust distribution of wealth convulse one nation after another. If that is the case, is the Church's comparative indifference, not only to economic questions but to those economic forces which hold the life of the people at their mercy, justified? These forces are far more important than the form of government under which we live.

Democracy cannot hope to survive unless it learns to master the economics of its environment. 'That is why I plead that the Church should interest itself in the education of Democracy, in order that Democracy may not permit itself to be the sport of uncontrolled forces. That is why I plead for the Church to create a Democracy capable of relating economics to the life of the Spirit.' We have to make economic peace before we achieve political peace. And for this the supreme need is the Christian gospel. But if the Church is to do its part, it needs to come under the sway of its own message. 'I think that the Church as an institution is almost as much in need of God as the world itself.' It is strangely blind to the urgent need of education and economic security. We need a Church more alive to reality, and more disinterested, and one ready to pay the price of

redemption. For such a Church there is still a future, not only of life but of service to humanity.

Sir Ambrose FLEMING has written a book, *The Origin of Mankind* (Marshall, Morgan & Scott; 3s. 6d. net), with a double aim—to combat the scientific theory of evolution, and to establish the authority of the Bible account of the Creation, the Garden of Eden, and the Flood. He thinks that the reckless propagation of the theory of organic evolution, without regard to the strong arguments that can be urged against it, constitutes a serious danger to youth. And in any case, when a man of his eminence states a case, it is well that it should be heard. Sir Ambrose is President of the Victoria Institute and Philosophical Society of Great Britain; President of the Television Society; Emeritus Professor of Electrical Engineering in the University of London; and a Fellow of two university colleges.

The theory of organic evolution that he combats is that of a development of the physical universe as a whole, and of organic species in particular, due to the automatic, uncontrolled, or unguided action of physical agencies or energies themselves. In particular, he denies the validity of that theory of the origin of the human race which views it as an evolution from the animal race generally. It is this last point that he deals with specially, though the whole idea of automatic evolution is always part of the target. He does not deny development, even that of species. But he asserts as his main contention that man is a special creation, that the different races of man were special creations, and that the account of man's origin in the Bible is veracious, historical, and to be accepted as fact.

The facts he cites against the theory of organic evolution are these. There is no sufficient evidence to show that distinct species have been produced by natural selection. There is no real fossil evidence of transition. In some cases some modern forms of life have remained the same right through the vast period of that geological time represented by

fossil-bearing strata. And, whilst considerable modifications can be made by cross-breeding between some animals, there are certain fixed limits never overpassed. We can produce great varieties of dogs within the dog species by human selection, but we cannot convert a dog into a cat. Very various types of animals, such as the enormous prehistoric reptiles and quadrupeds, have appeared, but no adequate transition forms remain to show the production of modern reptiles, birds, and fishes from a common invertebrate ancestor.

Further, while the author admits the interest and significance of those discovered remains of ancient human or sub-human beings, like the 'Neanderthal' man, the 'Heidelberg' man, Pithecanthropus, and the rest, there will be a good deal of sympathy with his scepticism about the 'reconstructions' of these slender remains. The pictures made of what they would have been are of necessity nine-tenths fancy, and, as Sir Ambrose points out, we know next to nothing about what these beings were like. Science has not yet discovered any real link with the sub-human species.

Moreover, there is a fundamental difference between man and the whole 'animal' race. Man is educable in the fullest sense. He has a mental progressiveness and self-educative power that are not found in the animal. No race of savages or uncivilised men has yet been found in which the religious ideas and moral feelings cannot be increased or produced, and such abstract ideas as those of God, Right and Wrong cannot be implanted. But it cannot be done with the highest and most intelligent animals. It is in these *potentialities* that the chief differentia exist.

These points are, of course, developed at considerable length. And then the author proceeds to vindicate the Biblical account of origins against the representation of it as consisting of legends, or 'myths.' Sir Ambrose confuses legend and myth, which are totally different things. Myth is a pure creation of the imagination. Legend has a core of historic fact. It is a pity the author has cumbered his perfectly reasonable argument against

a godless view of evolution with a literalistic view of inspiration which few educated persons could receive. But his contentions about the early narratives of Genesis are so unusual that we cannot resist the temptation of describing them.

One of the most interesting of these quaint ideas is that Adam was not the first man at all. The fact that Cain got a wife shows that there were other human beings on the earth before, and contemporary with, Adam. These were ethically inferior beings, and were the first step in advance of the animal races. They were followed by the creation of a being more adequately endowed with a higher nature. Adam was the first to be created in God's image. The Adamites were a special and superior race. As a matter of fact, all races on the earth were special creative acts. And the Caucasian, which is the highest of the human races, has been the product of the Adamite family.

This new type of man, specially made in the likeness of God, was subjected to a test to see if he would submit himself to the commands of the Creator. The tempter was a 'serpent.' Not a real serpent. The Bible is essentially a 'picture book,' and in reality the serpent was a spirit, an evil spirit, who came in this form. 'Having regard to the facts of psychical research, vouched for by much unquestionable evidence, it is not an unreasonable suggestion that amongst the powers of the evil spirit he may be able to "materialise" himself in human form. . . . There is no need to hypothecate an actual talking serpent of animal shape.' And the doom of the serpent is also allegorical. 'On thy belly shalt thou go' is as allegorical as Napoleon's phrase, 'an army goes on its belly,' which meant that it was concerned largely with food, shelter, equipment. 'Dust shalt thou eat' recalls a similar phrase, 'biting the dust.' And so the doom is simply the ultimate extinction of the tempter.

One other touch may be, must be, added. The human pair had free access to the fruit of the tree of life during their residence in Eden. This tree 'was evidently extremely rich in those ingredients

we now call vitamins and had the power of prolonging life.' The result of this is seen in the abnormally long life enjoyed for ten generations after the Flood. It will be seen that the historical trustworthiness of the early Genesis narratives is established by taking away their naïveté and

naturalness and 'interpreting' them. The six days were periods, the Flood was local, the serpent was not a serpent, Adam was not the original man, the ancient patriarchs could live for hundreds of years because they were charged with vitamins from the Tree of Life.

Christian Faith and the Historic World-Order.

BY THE REVEREND PROFESSOR J. G. RIDDELL, M.A., TRINITY COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

No thinking man, in days when history is being made, can fail to ask himself about the meaning of the happenings which are taking place around him. There is no longer the sense of security and peacefulness in a well-ordered universe, gradually being brought under the control of man, that belonged to our forefathers. The world seems to have broken free of man's dominion; stability and security alike belong to the past rather than to the present; and what the future holds no one dare confidently predict. It is with one aspect of this problem that our subject has to do—in what way are the events of the historic order to be related to Christian faith in God? Do the fingers of a man's hand still write, in hours of crisis, the word of Judgment, as on the wall, over against the candlestick, of Belshazzar's palace? Do the fingers nailed upon the Cross still mean that God is love—that He who so loved the world then must love it still? Are we entitled to say that particular happenings are to be interpreted in the light of religion and its teaching? Are we to see God's hand in the ending of one era and the beginning of another, in the breaking down of the old and the instituting of the new? How far may peace and war, prosperity and adversity, victory or defeat, be linked up with the divine will and purpose? Such are some of the questions which we may be asked to consider in thinking about Christian faith and the historic world-order.

In order to introduce the subject, let us take time to glance briefly at one or two views of the relationship of history and faith. Let us notice first a familiar truth—that the denial of history is also a denial of Christian faith. By the denial of history I mean a system of belief, or a philosophical

theory, which reduces all events to a uniform level of meaninglessness and robs them of real significance. There is, for example, the idea, so familiar in the ancient world and prevalent still in Eastern lands, of a periodic cycle, within which all events repeat themselves without beginning and without end. Again, there is the assertion, as old as Greek philosophy, and re-stated in different ways by more recent thinkers, that truth is timeless and necessary, and can never be found in the temporal or the contingent.

If either of these views be accepted, history loses all reality, for nothing in the recurring or the transient order of events can bear relationship to anything more ultimate than itself. To borrow an illustration from Karl Heim,¹ the story of humanity is like a train travelling on a railway track infinitely long, on which it moves forward from station to station, but, because we see no satisfactory end to the journey, we must attempt to leap out of the train and escape from the course of time into some non-temporal sphere where alone is to be found the satisfaction which we seek. *Mutatis mutandis* this criticism, directed against the idea of truth as necessary and timeless, might be passed also on the theory of endless periodicity with its wheel of time from which men seek to escape. Neither theology nor history can find value in such conceptions. With the denial of any ultimate meaning to history, there goes also, and significantly, a denial of Christian faith.

It is, indeed, through religion that men are brought to attach significance to historic happenings. The Old Testament is full of a sense of the meaning of events and the purpose linking one

¹ *The New Divine Order*, 53, 57.